



# HELPING UKRAINE

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

14th April 2022

**T**hank you all very much for your support of our efforts to help those fleeing the war in Ukraine. Your funds help those in need here in the Czech Republic and in Ukraine. Thank you for making this possible with your support!

On the following pages, you will find a summary of current information *from parishes and churches, from Christian Aid Centres, from the facilities we operate for refugees*, as well as *the status of the fundraiser*.

## ■ What is happening in parishes and congregations

ECM parishes and congregations helping Ukraine — week 4 - 10 April 2022

### Jihlava

We try to involve Mrs. Halina's family, who is staying at our parsonage, in a natural way in the congregational life. We have been helping the eldest daughter Ana repeatedly to find a job - she is only getting short-term substitutes, but she is very clever and is praised everywhere, so we believe that good references will help her to find a stable job. We met Mrs. Tatiana, a member of an active Baptist congregation from central Ukraine, who is in Jihlava with her three children. They came to our worship services, and the children visited the Royal Rangers and youth club meetings. We organised an afternoon meeting with the two families. We deal with their normal needs, but leave them the initiative and help where something needs to be arranged in advance or where there is a language barrier.

We are also preparing a leaflet with our offer for people from Ukraine - a Bible group in Russian on Sundays, a friendly conversation in English with babysitting on Mondays, and an invitation to worship with the possibility of translation into Russian.

*Libuše Hajčiarová, according to the coordinator Alexandra Grace*

## Jablonné v Podještědí

We have 13 people from Ukraine (7 women, 1 teenager and 5 school children) staying in the apartment and prayer room at the moment. They all come from the war zone of Mykolayiv and have arrived successively in several groups.

They show a certain degree of financial independence so far with the help of state support. They are grateful for the free accommodation. They received hygiene supplies from the humanitarian warehouses. They arrange their own food and have not asked for assistance in this. One woman and a teenager from the group that arrived first are already employed. Another woman takes care for the children. We assume that the others will also start working after some time. 3 children go to school where the municipality has arranged free lunches for them. They are all happy to be safe, but they also cry a lot.

Thus, we are already over capacity and the worship life of the station has been moved to the Wagner family (members of the local church).

Jan Wagner would like to welcome an elderly couple from Ukraine, preferably believers, into his home in Petrovice, to whom he would like to offer long-term support and also paid work in helping with the running of the household and farm.

*Pastor Zdenek Brož*

## Protivín

Our congregation opened a meeting place for Ukrainian children and mothers in early March, and later a retired local teacher took over teaching the children. The ministry was challenging, as the children are of different ages and communication was difficult for all of them, although sometimes fun. The number of children gradually increased to fifteen. The activity has now moved to the local primary school where there are better facilities for the ever increasing number of children. We are glad to have been able to offer help to those in need at a critical time and are always ready to help at any time.

*Pastor Richard Novák*



## Strašnice

We have one Ukrainian family staying at our parsonage, who originally came for 1-2 days and ended up staying for 4 weeks. They will be with us for one more week and then they should move to an apartment arranged by one of the members from our congregation. We hope to keep in touch even then. It was very nice when Mrs. Oxana cooked a big pot of borscht for our church lunch. After Mrs. Oxana's family

leaves, we want to continue to function as transitional housing for other refugees. Hardly a day goes by that I do not get a call from Prague Central Station saying they need to house someone else. Our partner congregation in the USA, Decatur TX also sent a contribution to help us and they are grateful for an information.

*Pastor Milan Mrázek*

## **Litoměřice**

We are all aware of the difficult and painful situation of the newcomers, and that is why we are helping, we want to make it easier and more pleasant for them. And we also want our help to be effective. We try to continue to help together with other volunteers at the Litoměřice hostels for mothers with children - after a month since their arrival, the period of acute aid to provide basic needs (housing, food, clothing, health, basic documents, basic financial support) has ended.

- The time of integration and inclusion, partial independence, resumption of daily habits (work, school, shopping, taking care of the place where I live) is beginning.
- We see signs of burnout, fatigue and stress on both sides, and with this comes the escalation of various small problems. No one wants problems to increase - so it is also a time of setting boundaries and rules, being aware of the varying levels of stress, anxiety, fear and frustration in residents and newcomers.
- We want to invite residents (even if only a fraction of them profess faith) not only to Easter services and congregational activities; we are also preparing an invitation and information in Ukrainian.
- We and the members of the congregation are ready to accommodate more refugees, the kindergarten is integrating two Ukrainian children and the school about one first grader.

*Pastor Filip Jandovsky*

## **What is happening in Christian Aid Centers**

**The Christian Aid Center helping Ukraine — week 4 - 10 April 2022**

### **Christian Aid Center Praha – Horní Počernice**

*The story of one of the Ukrainian mothers staying at the centre*

Julia was one of the first women we welcomed into the shelter a month ago, along with her extended family. They are a Ukrainian family of ten who came from Vasilkov, which is part of the Kiev region. In Ukraine, Julia ran a hair salon for men, offering various services including manicures, pedicures and



cosmetics in addition to haircuts. Julia is a very entrepreneurial woman who cannot be idle, so we were not surprised that within a few days she started cutting our colleagues and friends' hair.

A few days ago, she asked us for a piece of land on which she and the other women in the group had set up a bed for vegetables and herbs.

Julia has a one-year-old daughter, Kvita, and an eight-year-old son, Hrdy, who has already started attending the local school. Her husband Artem and father have stayed in Ukraine and are fighting in the forests around Kiev.

Julia visited Prague in 2018 with her husband, who used to work there.

She showed me photos from their holiday together and it was obvious how hard it is for her to share memories from her travels when their world was still okay.

I wish she had visited Prague under very different circumstances, and not as a woman who fled the war.

*Gabriela Selinger, fundraiser*

## ■ What is happening in our refugee facilities

The Diakonia of the Czech UMC arranges and organizes accommodation for refugees in three facilities: two church facilities - the Veselka recreation house near Vimperk and the Poušť recreation area near Bechyně, and one borrowed - the Dekonta recreational house in Vojnův Městec (staffed by the Christian Aid Center Ječmínek, Žďár nad Sázavou). Coordination is provided by the director Karel Nyerges ([diakonie@umc.cz](mailto:diakonie@umc.cz)).

### Diakonia UMC

Currently, 51 people are accommodated in our refugee facilities - centres, and in total, these facilities have helped 58 people. 51 people is not a small number considering that all direct work with people from Ukraine is done by people who still have their own jobs. I originally thought (on the second day of the conflict) that to some extent the centres would be self-managed and that we would only be in contact with the people housed via telephone or other available media. However, at that time we had no idea who would actually arrive and subsequently be accommodated. We prepared everything very hastily and without any previous experience. So when the first people arrived on 5 March 2022, it was immediately clear that we would have to rethink the original idea very quickly. Mothers with small children came and are still coming now, and it is not possible for them to take care of e.g. heating the building or receiving food from the food bank etc. on their own.

We therefore quickly came to the conclusion that if the aid was to be truly effective, just having a roof over their heads was not enough. There needs to be a manager or team of people in each building who

can take care of the important administrative and social issues and also serve as a fixed point of connection between the residents and our society. These are the people who help in the centre all day long and become a kind of buffer to the residents' pain and a link to a safer world. I am so grateful for all these people - also because I can learn from them myself about dedication and perseverance.

In all three places, we have already used the services of a local doctor with whom we had previously arranged for possible collaboration. Most of the time it has been to deal with complications related to digestive issues, but at one facility we also have a mom who has a broken leg.

Some of the children already attend school and some of the parents even have jobs. Getting work for the people housed in a low employment area is a real challenge and so finding work is now the current issue that we are most concerned about.

The aim of all our work is to find jobs and housing for people from Ukraine and to provide them with the opportunity to communicate with a psychologist or other trauma specialist so that they can then live their lives without our support.

*Karel Nyerges, director of Diakonia UMC*

## ■ Current collection status

Status as of April 11, 2022:

Czech and foreign donors have sent a total of CZK 1,518,816. CZK 443,150 has been spent.

40% of this amount went to humanitarian aid directly to Ukraine,

60% to help refugees before the war here in the Czech Republic - whether in our facilities or in parishes and Christian aid centers. Additional payments for the necessary assistance are negotiated and currently in progress.

Thank you very much to all donors!

### **How we handle funds in the transparent account and donations from abroad:**

- Priorities for the use of resources respond to a changing and evolving situation. Given the difficulty of forecasting, the strategy is refined at regular intervals with particular regard to the effectiveness and sustainability of our aid - also in view of the commitment we have made to the specific people in our facilities and the trust they have placed in us.
- The main priority for us now is to secure and maintain the assistance to those who have already entrusted themselves to our Diakonia, parishes and centers, and to

- extend and continue this assistance. We do not forget about the direct humanitarian aid going to Ukraine, where we consider it important to effectively use the synergies with our Russian-speaking UMC and our direct contacts in Ukraine as well as our knowledge of the local terrain.
- On the basis of the actual operations to date, we are in the process of quantifying the costs of operating the refugee facilities established by Diakonia. For the time being, we expect to operate these facilities for at least the next six months. Even if the war ends immediately, the reconstruction of Ukraine and the need for refugees to stay abroad will take longer.
- With this in mind, we are also transferring a portion of the funds directly to Diakonia UMC - to an operationally earmarked account dedicated to the operation of our refugee facilities, and to enable longer-term planning and organization of this assistance.
- Diakonia UMC also tries to take advantage of all current opportunities for financial support to refugees from the state. Despite the government's media image, not everything is working as declared so far. Diakonia also tries to link our facilities with the respective municipalities and obtain their material and non-material support.
- Our churches and Christian Aid Centers respond selflessly and promptly to the need for help in their places of operation. These are also churches that find it difficult to manage a balanced budget on their own. It will therefore also be necessary to support them in their assistance to those fleeing the war in the medium and long term.
- The specific financial flows and the use of funds are currently approved by the Diakonia UMC Director together with the superintendent and the Head of the District Office. Daniela Hajčiarova (pomahame.ukrajine@umc.cz) is the contact person for collecting any requests from congregations and Christian Aid Centers for financial support within the framework of the transparent collection.
- All funds raised are earmarked for aid to Ukraine. Should an unexpected favorable situation arise and there is no further need to fund aid here in the Czech Republic or humanitarian shipments, any remaining funds would go directly to the rebuilding of Ukraine in cooperation with the Ukrainian Methodist Church. **Thank you for your trust in us to help those in need. In this situation, which is new for us, we are trying to help as efficiently and thoughtfully as possible with a good and quick result. We also thank you for your forbearance in gradually refining and fine-tuning the processes we have set up and seeking the most effective form of assistance.**

**Your trust is greatly appreciated.**

**For donations from abroad for our aid to Ukrainian refugees there are four ways:**

- You may send your gifts through the Advance of Global Ministries, CZECH REPUBLIC IN MISSION TOGETHER (#00399A).  
Go to <https://umcmmission.org/advance-project/00399a/> and click on the red DONATE NOW button.  
In the box that reads "Designate Your Gift" enter that it is for Ukraine Refugees.  
The funds are sent through the bishop's office, and we receive the full amount because banking fees are covered by other sources. (Preferable.)
- You may use the payment gateway at our web site <http://umc.cz/>. Please select EN in the upper right corner for English, this will allow you to pay in US\$. The funds will be converted into CZK and go directly to the transparent account. (We would receive the funds quickly, but pay fees 2% of the amount to the bank.)
- You may still transfer your gifts to Czech crowns transparent account  
IBAN: CZ10 2010 0000 0026 0212 9572      BIC/SWIFT: FIOBCZPPXXX
- You may still transfer your gifts to US\$ bank account dedicated to aid to Ukraine  
IBAN: CZ04 2700 0000 0013 8741 5749      BIC/SWIFT: BACXCZPP

Please do not send checks to Czechia, it is extremely costly and slow to cash them here.

*Thank you to everyone who is involved in helping those in need financially, by prayers, as well as with practical help and their time and energy.*

*Edited by Daniela Hajčiarová*